



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
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November 8, 2017

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

ROUTE TO: District Test Administrators and Information Technology Directors

FROM: Jeffrey B. Hauger, Ed.D., Director
Office of Assessments
Division of Talent and Performance

SUBJECT: Update on New Jersey's New Science Assessments

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) completed the state-required procurement process for the new science assessments that will be administered this school year. This memo provides information about the new science assessments, named the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment – Science (NJSLA-S), and it describes the supports the NJDOE will provide districts as they prepare for the upcoming administration.

Please note, at the November 1, 2017, State Board of Education meeting, the NJDOE proposed a change to New Jersey Administrative Code (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:8) that would require students in grade 5 to be assessed to align the assessment to the state's new elementary science standards. If the change is adopted, students in grade 4 would no longer take the state science assessment. The change to grade 5 would also apply to the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) science assessment. Since the change to the elementary state science assessment is pending the State Board of Education's review and adoption, specific information about the proposed changes in grades 4 and 5 will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Transition and Accountability

As the extended-procurement period prevented the NJDOE from providing this information about new assessments, there will be a two-year transition to using the science assessments for accountability.

- The spring 2018 administration of both the NJSLA and the DLM will be a field test, and results will not be included in a district's New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) review and will not affect a district's score.
- The spring 2019 administration will be a baseline year.

NJSLA-S Testing Platform

Under the NJDOE’s science assessment contract, Measurement Inc. will be the lead vendor of the assessments, and Pearson is the sub-vendor providing the testing platform. The NJSLA-S will be a computer-based test that will be administered to students through Pearson’s TestNav platform; it will have the full menu of accommodations that are provided on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The administration of the assessments will be managed through the PearsonAccessnext (PAN) web portal, which is the same platform used for the PARCC English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments. As a result of using the same computer-based testing platform for ELA, mathematics, and science assessments, districts will experience a simplified process for data management and administration preparation.

NJSLA-S Testing Window

Similar to the statewide PARCC ELA and mathematics assessments that New Jersey already administers, the NJSLA-S will be administered during a testing window as shown in Table 1, below. This provides districts flexibility by allowing them to set their own schedule and work around already-planned activities (e.g., the New Jersey Association of Student Councils awards ceremony in May). The timing for each of the grade-level assessments is shown in Table 2, below. Also, as they do with the PARCC assessments, districts can administer up to two units per day for each student, so students could complete testing in science in just two days.

Table 1: Testing Window for NJSLA-S

Spring 2018 Field Test Administration – Testing Window	
Computer-Based Tests – Elementary School, Middle School and High School	May 7 – June 8
Paper-Based Tests – Elementary School, Middle School and High School	May 14 – May 25

Table 2: Testing times for NJSLA-S (Computer and paper-based assessments have the same unit times)

Assessment	Test Units	Test Time per unit	Total Testing Time
Elementary School	4	30 minute units	2 hours
Middle School	4	45 minute units	3 hours
High School	4	60 minute units	4 hours

NJSLA-S Student Registration and Data

Student data will be uploaded to PAN using the same Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) upload process as is used with PARCC. For the Spring 2018 Field Test of the NJSLA-S, districts will upload their SR/PNP directly to PAN in order to register students for the assessment.

Timeline for the SR/PNP process:

- December 1, 2017: The SR/PNP field definition guide and file upload template for the NJSLA-S will be available via PAN.
- January 18, 2018 - February 1, 2018: The student data upload period.

Detailed instructions will be provided before the data upload period begins.

Test Administration and Trainings

The NJDOE will conduct regional professional-development workshops and will provide regional district test coordinator trainings. The regional district test coordinator trainings for the NJSLA-S will be in conjunction with PARCC regional trainings (i.e., the district coordinator training for science will be incorporated into the PARCC trainings that are already scheduled, so there will be no need to register or to attend two different trainings for PARCC and Science).

Dates for the regional trainings are:

- Northern region: February 28 and March 1
- Central region: March 5, 6 and 7
- Southern region: March 8, 2018

The NJDOE will be providing districts information on how to register for the regional trainings in early December.

Training sessions will also be available in the coming months on the DLM.

In addition to the regional trainings, instructional guidance documents will be made available detailing the procedures for tasks related to the administration of the NJSLA-S and the DLM assessments as well as information to aid in responding to questions from the local community.

NJSLA-S and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Since both the NJSLA-S and the DLM Science assessments will be field tests this year, changes in IEPs may not be necessary; however, each district should review their IEP procedures to determine where changes to the IEP may be needed. The NJDOE will provide additional guidance on IEPs and science assessments in the coming weeks.

JBH/

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